



Nov. 19, 2015

To: Instructional Quality Commission (California State Board of Education)
Re: History-Social Science Curriculum Changes Proposed by Hindu American Foundation

What if the Pope demanded schools in California teach that the Inquisition never happened or that the Christian church never participated in the Crusades?

That is the position in which the Hindu American Foundation places the California State Board of Education by demanding teachers present a religiously-biased interpretation of Hinduism.

HAF's demanded curriculum changes require teachers to: 1) "Make clear to students that [caste] was a social and cultural rather than a religious belief" and 2) Teach that caste status in Hinduism is "not by birth itself."

HAF, a religious organization, asks California's teachers to contradict internationally-celebrated Dalit civil rights champion Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, world famous Hindu preacher Mohandas Gandhi, and Hinduism's own religious texts.

In 1936, Dr. Ambedkar, born an Untouchable or outcaste, stated: "The law of caste confines its membership to person born in the caste.... Hindus... observe Caste because they are deeply religious.... [Hindu scriptures] enjoin as a religious duty the observance of Caste."

In the 1920s, Gandhi agreed both that caste is by birth and has a religious basis, saying: "One acquires one's caste by birth." He also claimed: "Caste has saved Hinduism from disintegration.... The law of heredity [of caste] is an eternal law." In 1933, he declared: "To abolish caste is to demolish Hinduism."

In fact, the caste system is taught by Hindu scriptures like the Rig Veda and Manusmriti, which include a creation myth where humans are created in four segregated castes of decreasing value. Manusmriti, teaching caste by birth, states: "A Brahmana, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth."

Please reconsider HAF's attempt to impose an academically unsound, intellectually dishonest, and revisionist interpretation of historical reality on California's students.

Affirmed by: Bhajan Singh (Founding Director), Pieter Friedrich (Advisor), Steve Macías (Outreach Coordinator), Dr. Amrik Singh (Advisor), M. R. Paul (Advisor)

Contact: Arvin Valmuci, arvin.v@ofmi.org